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GENERAL ORDERS

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HEADQUARTERS
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON, DC, 14 November 2013

AWARD OF THE MEDAL OF HONOR
Captain William D. Swenson

On 15 October 2013, the President of the United States of America, authorized by an Act of Congress, March 3, 1863, has awarded, in the name of Congress, the Medal of Honor to

Captain William D. Swenson
United States Army

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty:

Captain William D. Swenson distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as embedded advisor to the Afghan National Border Police, Task Force Phoenix, Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan in support of 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, during combat operations against an armed enemy in Kunar Province, Afghanistan on September 8, 2009. On that morning, more than 60 well-armed, well-positioned enemy fighters ambushed Captain Swenson's combat team as it moved on foot into the village of Ganjgal for a meeting with village elders. As the enemy unleashed a barrage of rocket-propelled grenade, mortar and machine gun fire, Captain Swenson immediately returned fire and coordinated and directed the response of his Afghan Border Police, while simultaneously calling in suppressive artillery fire and aviation support. After the enemy effectively flanked Coalition Forces, Captain Swenson repeatedly called for smoke to cover the withdrawal of the forward elements. Surrounded on three sides by enemy forces inflicting effective and accurate fire, Captain Swenson coordinated air assets, indirect fire support and medical evacuation helicopter support to allow for the evacuation of the wounded. Captain Swenson ignored enemy radio transmissions demanding surrender and maneuvered uncovered to render medical aid to a wounded fellow soldier. Captain Swenson stopped administering aid long enough to throw a grenade at approaching enemy forces, before assisting with moving the soldier for air evacuation. With complete disregard for his own safety, Captain Swenson unhesitatingly led a team in an unarmored vehicle into the kill zone, exposing himself to enemy fire on at least two occasions, to recover the wounded and search for four missing comrades. After using aviation support to mark locations of fallen and wounded comrades, it became clear that ground recovery of the fallen was required due to heavy enemy fire on helicopter landing zones. Captain Swenson's team returned to the kill zone another time in a Humvee. Captain Swenson voluntarily exited the vehicle, exposing himself to enemy fire, to locate and recover three fallen Marines and one fallen Navy corpsman. His exceptional leadership and stout resistance against the enemy during six hours of continuous fighting rallied his teammates and effectively disrupted the enemy's assault. Captain William D. Swenson's extraordinary heroism and selflessness above and beyond the call of duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, Task Force Phoenix, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and the United States Army.

